

## Notes from Town Council Meeting on 19th September 2018

### Update on the Old A40 closed road.

Gloucestershire Highways came to the Town Council meeting last Wednesday to present plans and costings for repairing the closed Old A40 road. Danny Taylor the Local Highways Manager and Cllr Mark Darlow-Joy, Highways Contracts Manager at Gloucestershire County Council gave the Town Council and attending residents an update. The following are notes from the unsigned draft minutes taken on the night.

Mark deals with capital repairs to the road network and gave background information on the landslip. This road has been monitored for years but a number of new cracks appeared and there was further movement. Although they didn't want to close it, Highways believed that was the safest thing to do so they could establish what the issues were. Instruments and bore holes were inserted into the ground around the landslip to monitor movement. These were checked monthly over the course of a year to determine the failure line and the impact of seasonal weather. Although failure lines can go up to 30 metres into the ground, it was established that the failure on the closed section is quite shallow. They believe that if it does slip further it would be only a shallow section affected. They considered rebuilding the supporting wall but this would have cost a very large amount. Initial figures to fully repair and reopen the road were estimated to be around £500k. The scheme would have been set against other busier and higher priority roads, Highways would not have been able to justify the cost and the road would not have been opened in the near future.

Having looked at all the options available, Highways are proposing the following in order to reopen the road. The proposed scheme would see a single lane track from near the top of the hill, running for about 150m down to the failed section. This would have hatched road markings to narrow the existing carriageway width down to a single running lane with passing places to manage traffic through the landslip area. At the existing area where the landslip has occurred they would install new timber post and rail fence line to form a barrier from passing vehicles. Coming down the hill the right-hand lane by the woods would be the lane that is opened. Highways propose to use the long single-track access and secure fencing as a traffic calming feature along with signage and bollards to reduce speeds. This will give vehicles plenty of time to slow down as they approach the affected area. A 17metre long section of the road will need to be dug out to rebuild the drainage pipes so water is removed rather than lubricating the ground which could accelerate the slippage. This is not a long-term permanent solution but it is a temporary one which will enable the road to be reopened. There would be a weight limit on vehicles implemented.

The total scheme will cost £58K and some of this has already been allocated. So far £10K has already been spent on the site with the investigations and safety measures and £6K has been spent on this design which leaves £42K to find. Danny Taylor has £5K from his minor works budget, Cllr Paul Hodgkinson has committed £6K this year and £6K next year from his Highways Local budget plus £5k from his Community Fund. This leaves £20K outstanding. Northleach Town Council were asked if they contribute half of this, £10K then Highways will community match fund the rest. Using all these sources of funding, the Old A40 could be reopened by the end of March. Although this affects

several neighbouring parishes they do not raise Precepts which would enable them to contribute tax payer's money to the scheme.

Cllr Paul Hodgkinson thanked Danny and Mark for coming up with alternatives and a design which is achievable. The recent survey Paul did saw 152 people agree in principle to the road being reopened and 26 said no.

Residents spoke of some of the problems that were being experienced on the closed road which include fly tipping, unofficial camping and car racing. The alternative routes are looking becoming busier affecting residents on the junction of the traffic lights, along the Saltway and through Hampnett. Residents higher up the road are finding it very inconvenient to access Northleach easily. Residents heard from a business owner wanting to convert Old Hills Barn into a health and wellness business and explained that the social and economic benefit to Northleach could be substantial in terms of job creation and new activities.

Councillors explained that large requests for funds like this need to be considered carefully. Supporting the road repair was not budgeted for this year so if Councillors agree to support the reopening, they will need to review the Council's finances and consider the different options for funding the repairs.

The following actions were agreed: The Finance Committee meet on 9th October and will review the figures for this year and consider the Council's options. Following this, an Extraordinary Meeting will be called (proposed date 15th October) to make a decision as Highways need a response in the next month.

#### **Updates after the Meeting**

**Following the meeting, the Town Council were approached by Stowell Park Estate. They have offered £5K to support the reopening of the Old A40 and this will be discussed at the Extraordinary meeting.**

**In addition, a Crowd Funder has been set up to try and raise a further £5K. Please note that this was not set up by Northleach with Eastington Town Council.**

Kind regards

Cat Crompton

Town Clerk

Northleach with Eastington Town Council

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